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# VAN HALEN BALANCE



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> Because they contain no parts for guitar or voice, "Strung Out" and "Doin' Time" are not included in this songbook.



The Seventh Seal

Can't Stop Jovin' You

Don't Tell Me (What Tove Can Do)

Baluchitherium

Amsterdam

Big Fat Money

Not Enough

Aftershock

Jake Me Back (Deja Vu)

Deelin)

Tablature Explanation/Notation Legend 136

FULL COLOR FOLD-OUT FOLLOWS PAGE 56

# by H P Newquist

Reprinted from GUITAR, March, 1995

Eddie Van Halen is the prototypical American guitar icon. No stateside guitar player since Jimi Hendrix has managed to capture the collective imagination and awe of the world's electric guitarists like Van Halenno one.

Over the course of two days, we spent time with him as he filmed the video to "Don't Tell Me (What Love Can Do)," a part of the corporate music process he particularly dislikes. We also observed the frenzy at his home studio, 5150, as the band prepared for the release of its 10th studio album, Balance. Despite the madhouse atmosphere at 5150, it was clear that Eddie would be an extremely happy guy if he could spend all his time there. With that in mind we take you on a tour of one day in the studio with Eddie Van Halen.

5150, the infamous playground of Eddle Van Halen, is tucked into the recesses of the Hollywood Hills, hidden so well that not even Sherlock Holmes could find it without a map or a street address. The studio is actually located on a hillside slope that sits above Ed's main house, accessible only by a curved driveway that also what its way out to the pool house.

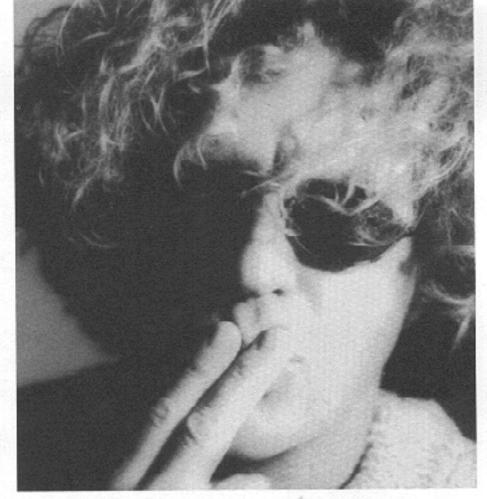
5150, the building, looks like a small house. A baskotball hoop hangs over the main door, and a golf practice net is draped across the second floor patio. The driveway runs right past the building, and numerous cars are parked up close to its doors. It is painted a basic southern-California desert brown, and is notable primarily for its lack of windows.

It's a hot morning, the day after Van Halen's video shoot for "Don't Tell Me (What Love Can Do) " The entire band is congregated here to finish up last-minute business relating to the release of Balance, the 10th studio album of the band's career, and the fifth VI-I album to be recorded on this site. It's early for almost everybody, except Eddie, a notoriously early riser in a world of late-sleepers.

The building is divided linearly into four separate sections: a live recording room at one end, the control room next to that, an office, and then a game room. In the office, there are computers and a fax machine, with an inordinate number of political and joke faxes pinned to the wall. Van Halen memorabilia-concert posters, tour badges, record company swag-is randomly hung about the room alongside signed pictures of golfers and other sports figures. At the far end of 5150, the game room is complete with classic arcade games such as Asteroids and Space Invaders. The studio is a nice size, but not overly large. In fact, if 5150 weren't located on Eddie Van Halon's property, it could be just another small studio located in L.A.

"We've done every record since 1984 here," Eddie says, squinting in the sunlight. "It's where I go every day, where I go to hang out. I even come up in my bathrobo. I usually get up at about seven in the morning-hey, I got a kid. Sometimes I'll bring Wolf and he'll bang around on Alex's drums.

"This place is like Fort Knox," he daims. "Nothing happened to it during the earthquake in 1994. It's all two-foot cinder block filled with cement. It ain't going anywhere." He laughs and points over to



the main house. "A lot of cosmetic damage happened to the house. Man, that earthquake scared the shit out of mell thought that Satan himself was underneath the house. The TV spit about five feet off the wall and I almost got nailed by that It was hell, man. I'm pretty propared, too; I've got my flashlight and boots next to the bed. But this one hit so hard that I had one boot on, my underwear half on, and I was falling on the floor. I couldn't do anything. In the meantime, Valerie's already in Wolfie's room grabbing him, and was back already. It was like she was on autoplot."

There are various people running in and out of 5150, making deliveries, dropping off tapes, stopping by to check on the band's schedule. Eddio walks out of the studio office and into the console room. He toys with some settings on the board and then cues up the tape of the new record. "Donn Landee (engineer for early VH recordings) actually designed this studio. It just started out as a demo thing, a place where I could go and have fun. We built it with a very small budget in mind, and then as it grew over the years, we started to go, "F\*\*\*, we can actually make records here! Let's buy a new console, let's buy this, let's buy linat." It's not like I started out saying let's have a professional studio at home—it wasn't like that at all. You should have seen what we did 1984 on; a \$6,000 piece of shit console that came out of United Western, an old green World War I thing with big old knobs and tubes. Donn rewired it to make it work."

Just as Eddie gets ready to turn on the tape, Bruce Fairbairn, the producer of Balance, drives up and waves through the door leading to the driveway. Eddie goes out to meet him and chats about the release of the record. Bruce mentions that he wants Eddie to play on the next Chicago record. Chicago? As in "25 or 6 to 4"? As in "Color My World"? "Yeah," says Eddie, "it should be tun. Bruce wants me to play on this big-band rendition of the old classic 'Caravan.' It'll be cool."

Bruce heads into the office, and Eddle talks about the production on the new album. "We met with a bunch of different people when we were looking for a producer. I talked with Mike Clink, with Bob Rock, with Andy Johns—they were all busy. Of all the guys we talked to and considered, Bruce Fairbaim was the one who worked out. We had already done a few albums on our own, but I prefer to work with somebody and bounce our ideas off of them. Just an outside ear, you know? But producing's a very elusive job. You're everything from baby-sitter to amateur psychologist and schoolteacher, and you're just trying to keep it all going in the right direction. I still write the music, Sammy still writes the lyrics, and all four of us together as a band still perform it. So it's hard to say what Bruce actually did. It wasn't like he got us to do anything we normally wouldn't do, but he did every now

and then get us to take a look at what we were doing and possibly approach it in a different way. He just got the best out of us.

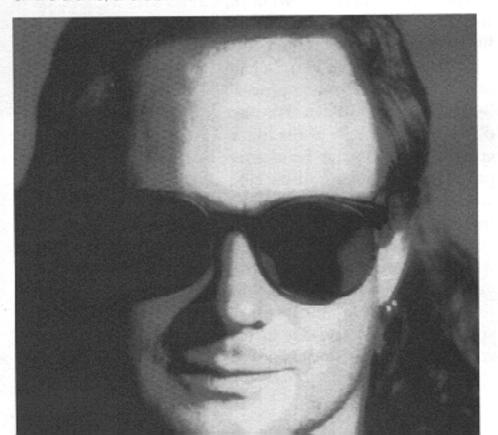
"Mike Frasier [engineer for Ralance] set us up, got the sound we wanted, and when we were happy with it, we called up Bruce and said, 'Come on, let's go.' We started working on the album with Bruce in June right here. We did everything in 5150 except for a few lead vocals, which we did up in Vancouver. That was really just to help Bruce out, because he was flying down here every week, so we did some stuff up there so he could spend more time with his family. Off and on, I guess Alex and I were dicking around in the studio since October of 1993. But we didn't start actual recording until June 1st, and it took us four months to write and record the whole thing. That's very quick, especially for us, but Bruce was very on top of things—ne doesn't let you get away with loaling. He has a schedule and he makes you stick to it.

"We mixed at the Record Plant, because the engineer who mixed it wasn't the guy who recorded us, so he wasn't familiar with my studio. But we'd still come up to my house to make sure it sounded right [laughs]."

Ed reaches over the board, starts the tape, and the room shatters. The sound is so ungodly, so loud, that it seems as if the roof is caving in. The opening strains of "Geventh Seal" come crashing out of the speakers, and the drumbeat snaps your neck back. The needles on the VU motors pin—they don't waver. No flutter, no dropback, no movement, no nothing. Just pinned high against the far right side of the red zone. Alex Van Halen strides in, yelling, "This really should be louder!" and pushes the fadors up two notches. There is nothing on earth louder than this moment in the control room at 5150. The brothers Van Halen smile like Cheshire cats. They like it loud.

After the tape runs through, Eddic decides that it's too nice a day to sit in the near-freezing control room, so he heads down to the pool house, which is at the end of the driveway and just past the studio. It is amazingly quiet there after the bombast of 5150. You can actually hear birds—if your ears aren't ringing.

Eddie lights a cigarette and pops on a pair of sunglasses. "This record has a really raw approach to it, but at the same time it's kinda polished—I con't know how to explain it. I just think we're getting better. We're tighter and I think that the record just sounds better—it's the best-sounding record we've made in a while. Listening back, I think the last record had a little too much cheese on it when we mixed it, but you always find that stuff in hindsight; things like too much room on the drums, and stuff like that. On Balance there's less effects, and



it's much more in-your-face. Plus, there's only one keyboard song, which is just the way this album worked out. We took a lot of stuff off—there's less echo, less harmonizer, less everything. The last one was too warm. I don't like that sound all that much anymore, although at the time I did."

He hunches forward on the table, the sun umbrela shadowing his face. "I didn't use the Soldano this time, I used my old Marshal, the one live used on every record, and my [Poavoy] 5150. I always play

behind the console, because I hate wearing headphones. I use two Shure 57s, one straight in and one angled to the side to get a little more bottom. I put that signal on the left, then I use the harmonizer to put it on the other side so I get a split pan, then delay on both signals and that's it. It's very simple. It's the same sound all the way through.

"The biggest difference between the sound of this album and the last one is really due just to mic placement and EQ. I thinned it out a lot, because I just got tired of the sound from For Unlawful Camal Knowledge. It worked on that record, but I didn't want it on this one. Andy Johns, who produced that one, was always a little over-the-top.

Not in a bad way, but when I would hear songs from that album on the radio, man, it was like there was so much trying to squeeze out of that little tiny speaker. There was too much bottom, and we backed off on that for Balance."

One striking facet of Balance that differentiales it from past VH cutings is the use of special effects and samples. Not guitar effects, but actual noises and sonic strangeness à la the car horn that opened 'Running with the Devil' almost 17 years ago. For instance, there's a cacophony of torturous piano sounds emanating from an instrumental that leads into 'Not Enough.' Eddie thinks about it for a moment and then laughs. 'That was stuff I did 10 years ago on Marvin Hamlisch's piano. I was shitfaced drunk, and I ruined his piano, too. He was so pissed off. We rented his house for the summer, and everything in the house was white; a white Yamana grand, everything. I get there and go, 'Oooh, this is going to be fun' [rubs hands together gleefully]. Then I put cigarette burns all over the piano, knives and forks on the strings, plus things like batteries and all kinds of other weird shit."

The sounds and samples are scattered throughout Balance. "Bruce said to us, "Have some fun, do some sity shit," says EVH. "For instance, we recorded the money sound for 'Big Fat Money' right on the (recording console) board. We're dropping dimes and quarters and stuff and holding microphones up close to it, over and over, trying to get some of them to spin or stay up."

Van Halen guitar aficionados will notice some unusual guitar sounds, too. "The solo on 'Big Fat Money' has a tight echo siap, and I played a 335 with a real clean, low-volume sound. That was Bruce's Idea. A regular stock-type solo didn't seem to fit, and he said, 'Let's

try a little jazz sound' and I said. 'Okay, you mean something like this?' I was just joking around, but he rolled the tape. I did one pass at it, and he said, 'That's great!' So I go, 'Let's do it, then; I'm ready.' And he says, 'No, let's use that!' So that's what we used. It was just a cool little jazz thing, but it worked." Even though guitar effects were kept to a minimum, Eddie did squeeze in his beloved MXR foot pedals. "During 'Seventh Seal,' on the descending part (hums the line) I used the old MXR flanger. And I used it on 'Aftershock.' Everything else I

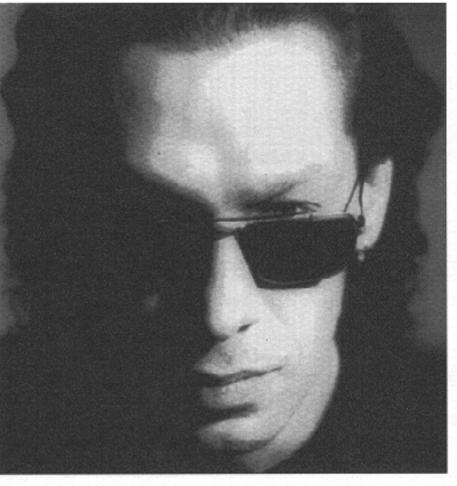
stopped using. I used to use Echoplexes, but they're too noisy and the tapes always f\*\*\* up." As always, "there's some tapping on this record, because it's always been a part of my playing. It's never been a flash trick, it's just there. I'll go from that to that [mimes taking right hand from bridge over to fretboard] without even knowing I'm doing it."

A plane passes overhead, breaking the stillness of the pool area. The conversation turns to the speaker system in the studio and the fact that "loud" doesn't even come close to describing the audio attack of 5150. As cool as it sounds, repeated listenings in 5150 cannot be good for one's ears. Eddle nods. "At 10k, I have the hearing of a 70 year old—at least that's what the doctor says. But it's just something that comes along

with the territory, I guess. I mean, I like the feel of the sound, especially live. I take a certain amount of precautions, like I generally only use my bottom cabinets. I feel sorry for AI, because drummers eat it by the cymbals. Cymbals are what get you. I think we all have some loss, but mostly Alex and I because of the frequencies of our instruments. Sammys not generally right in front of my cabinets, and Mike is safe at the low end. But I think in the club days it was worse, because we were on a very contained, small stage with a low ceiling, and standing up we were right at ear level with the cymbals. It would kill you. There's nothing you can do except to wear earplugs, and that makes me feel like I'm standing in another room playing. I can't be that removed. Loud sound inspires me."

"I only play acoustics when I have to. I like the sound of the electric guitar. I like the power, I like the vibe. It's so furnry when people do unplugged stuff; they do their heavy, loud stuff on acoustics. That ain't me, man. I would never do that. What's the point? Could you imagine Black Sabbath doing "into The Void" acoustically? I don't think so. The reason we did it electrically in the first place was because that's the way it was supposed to be. I'm not going to do flavor-of-themonth with my songs."

He leaves the poel and goes back into 5150, where a dozen people are clamoring for his attention, wanting him to sign this or approve that or sit still for this photograph. While he watches this maelstrom, Eddic innocently picks up his guitar, and starts playing something that only he can hear on the unplugged instrument. Above the human din, the slight clinking of metal strings is barely discernible—the sound of Eddie Van Halen, lord of 5150, spinning his strings into gold. Fort Knox, indeed.



## THE SEVENTH SEAL

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen











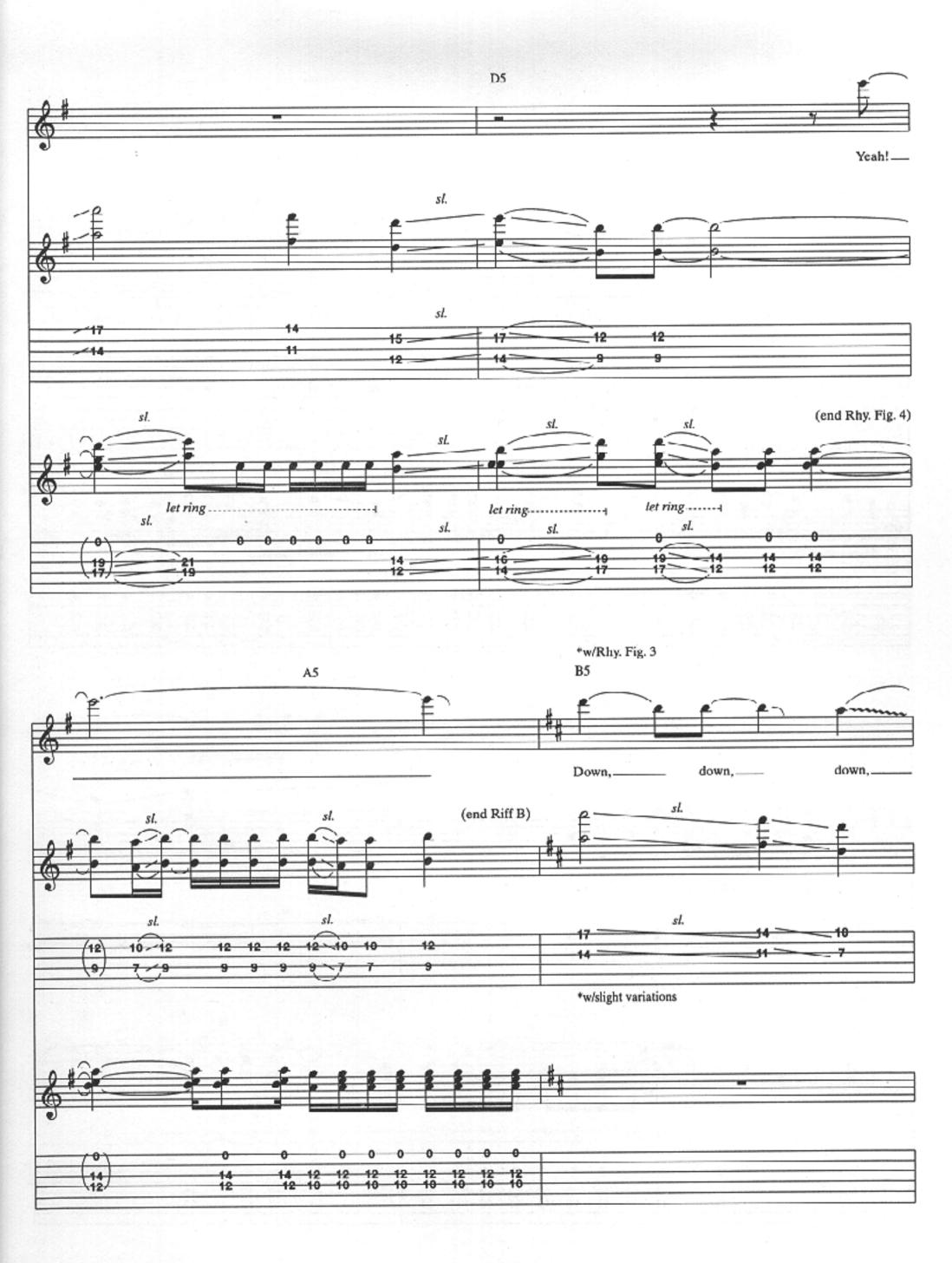








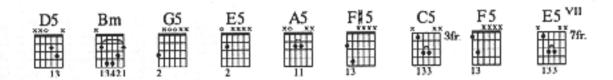






### CAN'T STOP LOVIN' YOU

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen





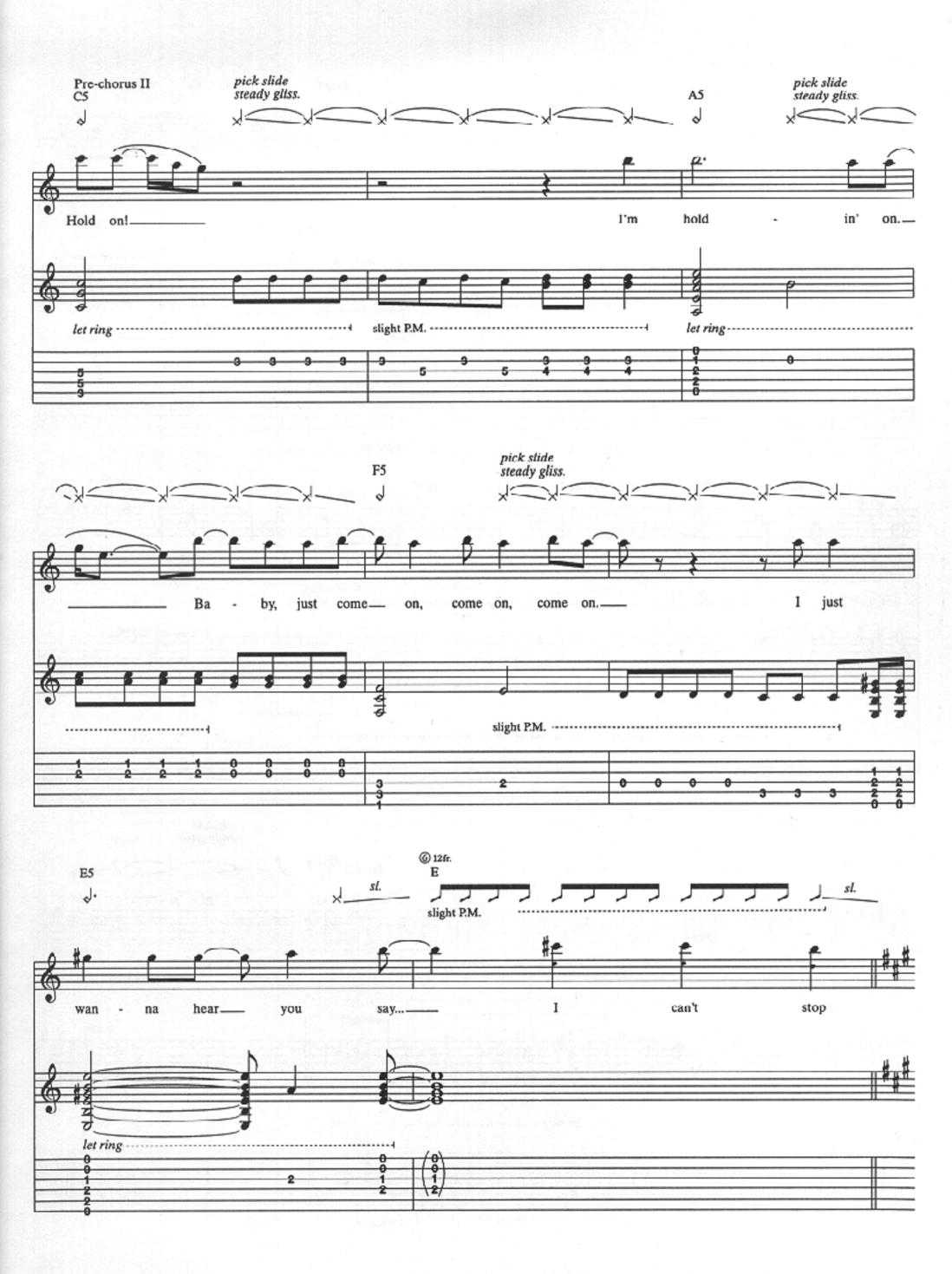






















### DON'T TELL ME (WHAT LOVE CAN DO)

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen































## BALUCHITHERIUM

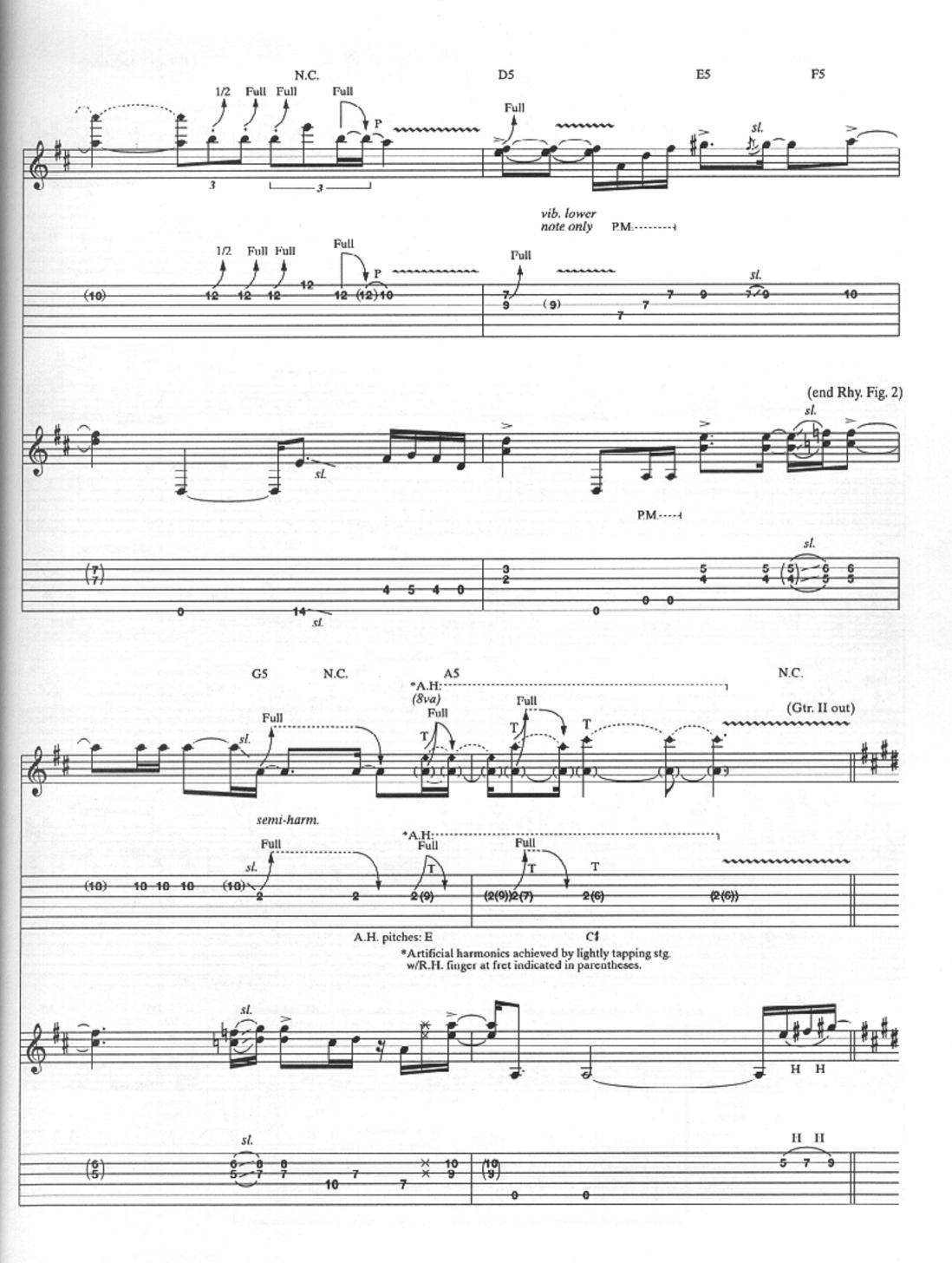
Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen





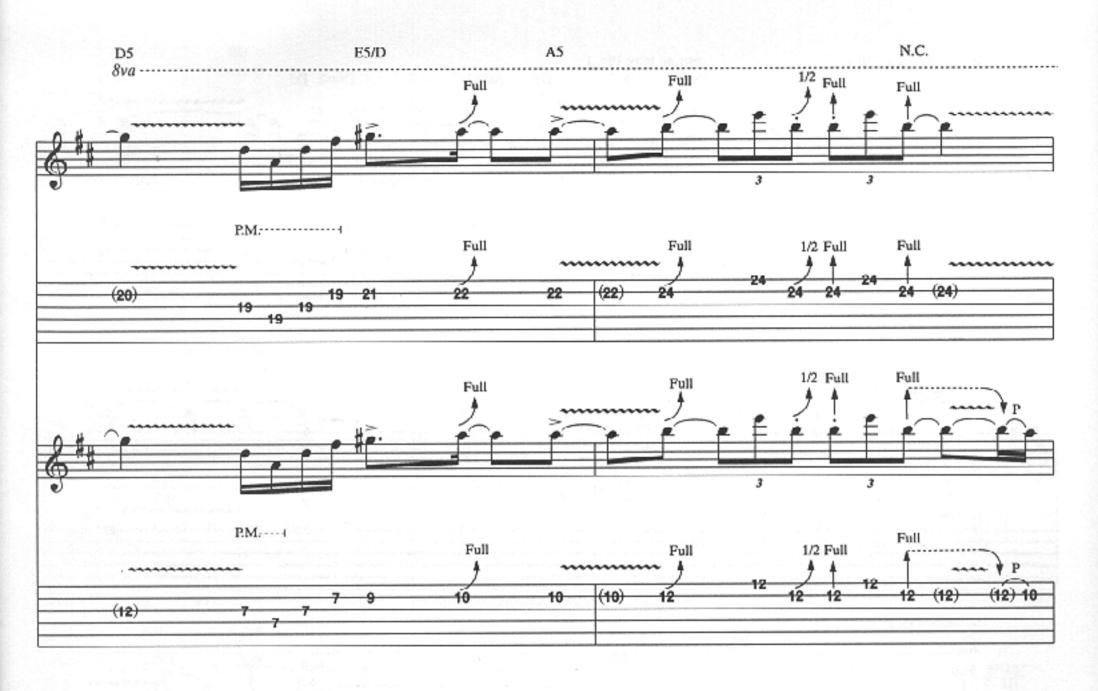


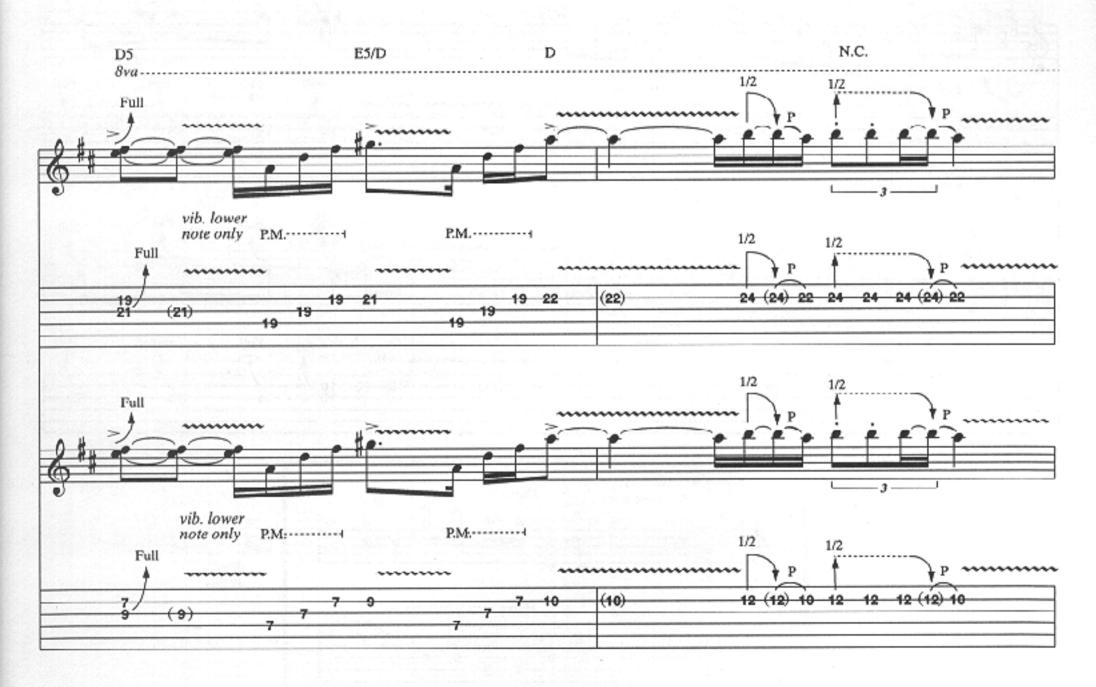




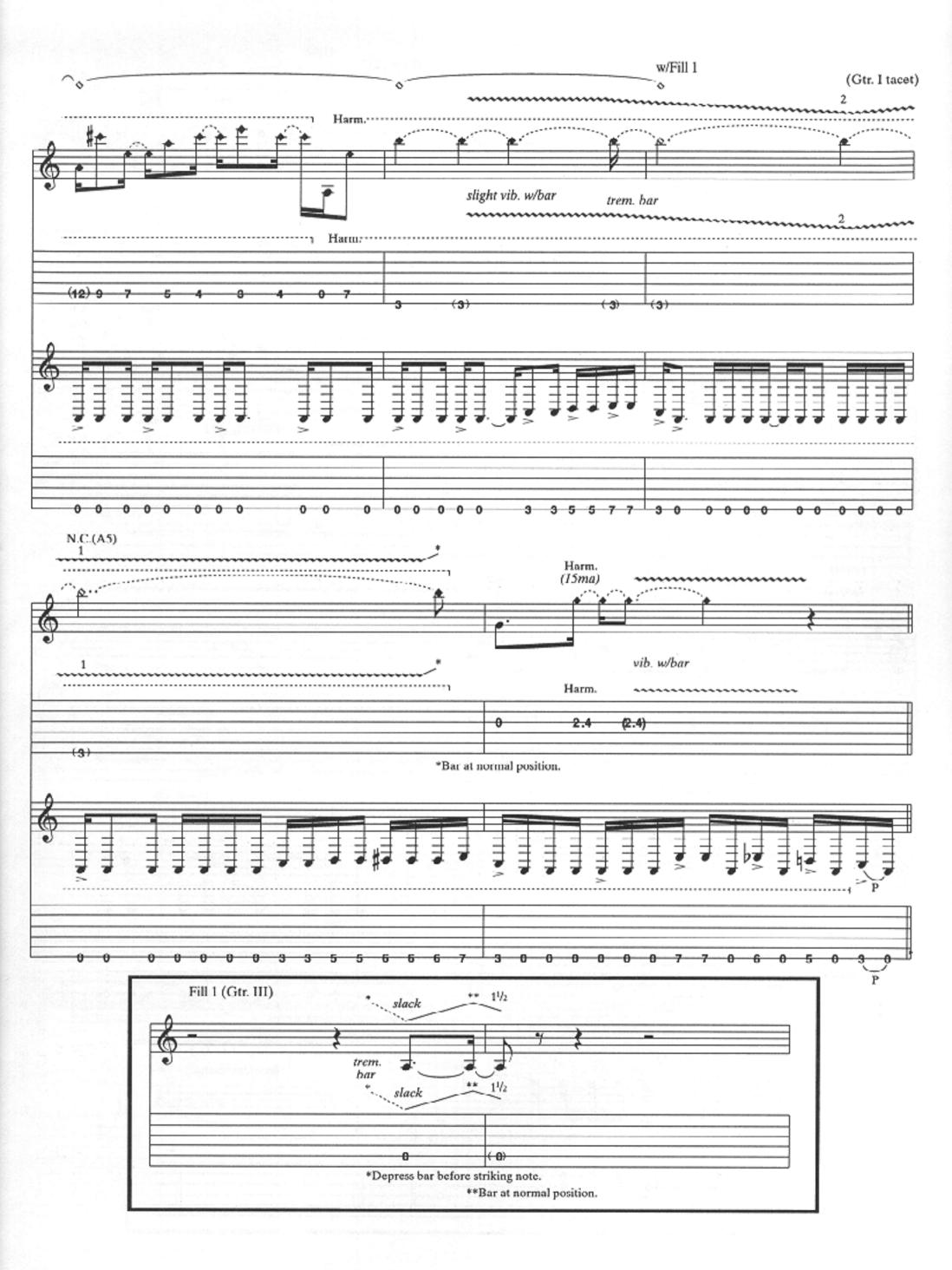
















## **AMSTERDAM**

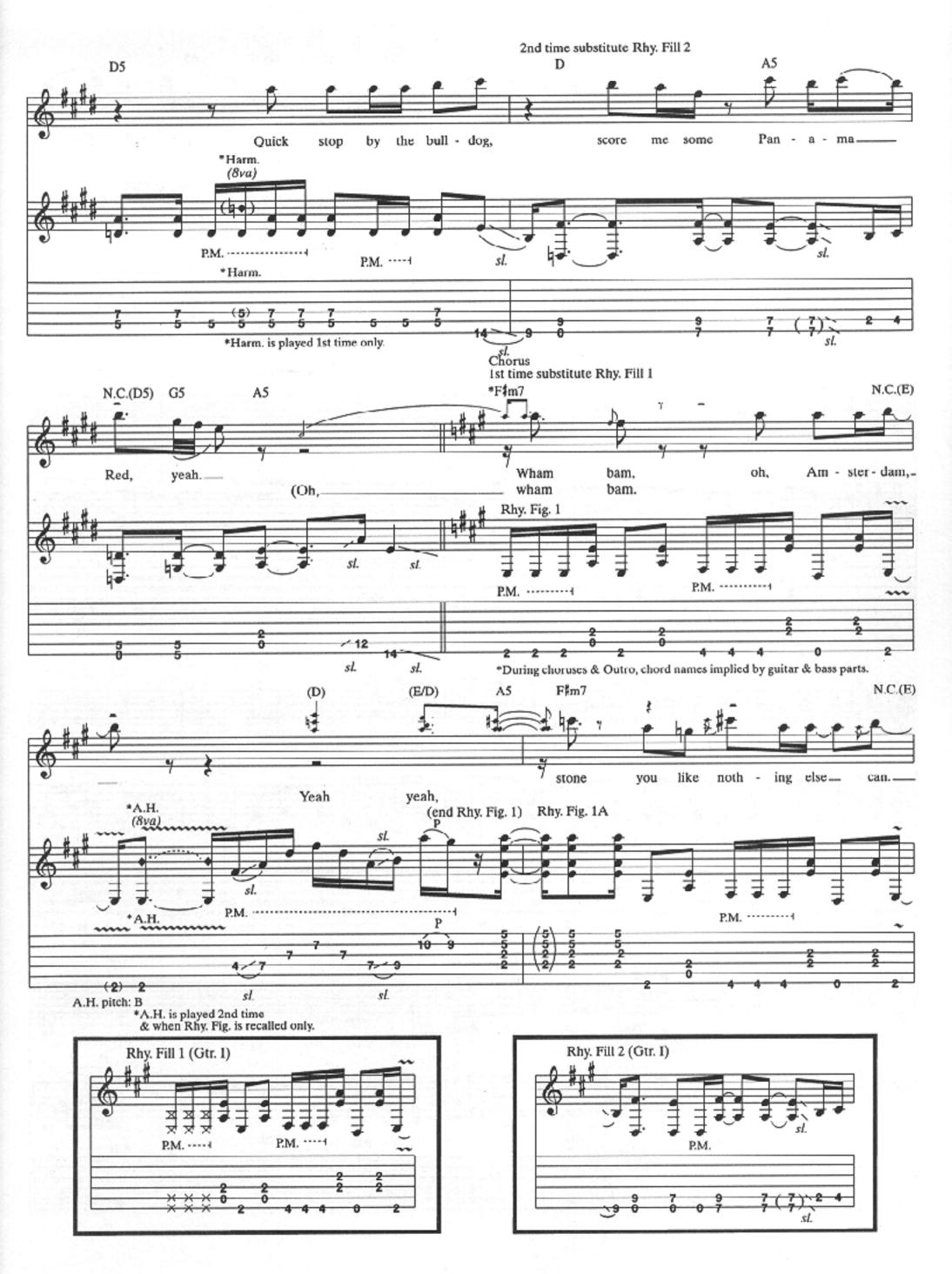
Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen

Drop D tuning: 6 = DModerately slow Rock J = 87 N.C. (E) (D) Intro (Spoken:) Light 'em up! Uh! A.H. (8va) Gtr. I pick scrapes ------A.H. A.H. pitch: C# (E) (D) (E) Oh, yeah! A.H. (8va) pick scrapes ..... A.H. A.H. pitch: D (D) (E) (2)-

sl.













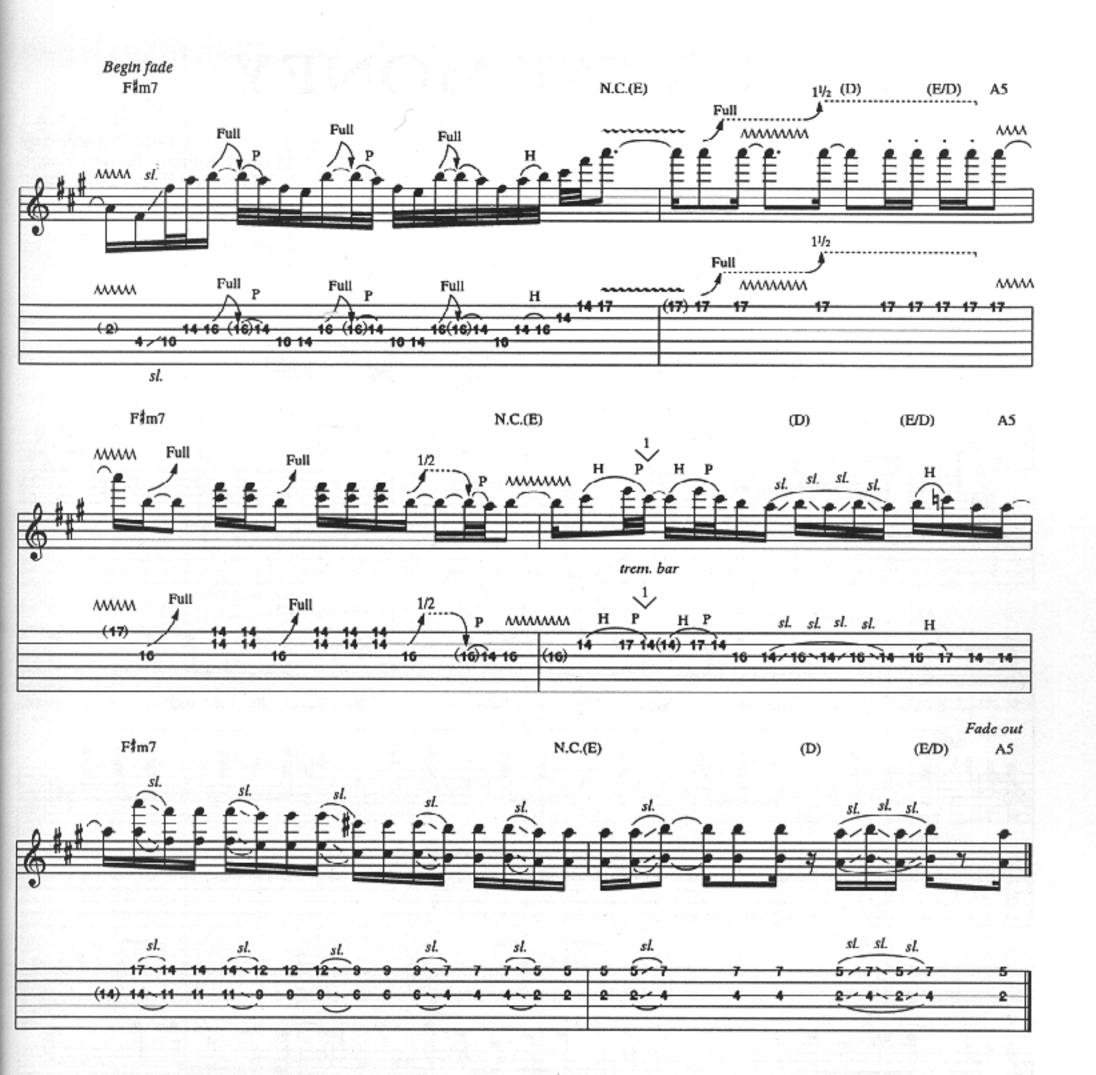












## Additional Lyrics

Caught a plane outta Moscow.
 Spent one cold night in Berlin, yeah.
 It's a long hard way,
 But I'm a-coming back again, yeah. (To Chorus)

## **BIG FAT MONEY**

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen



Harm.

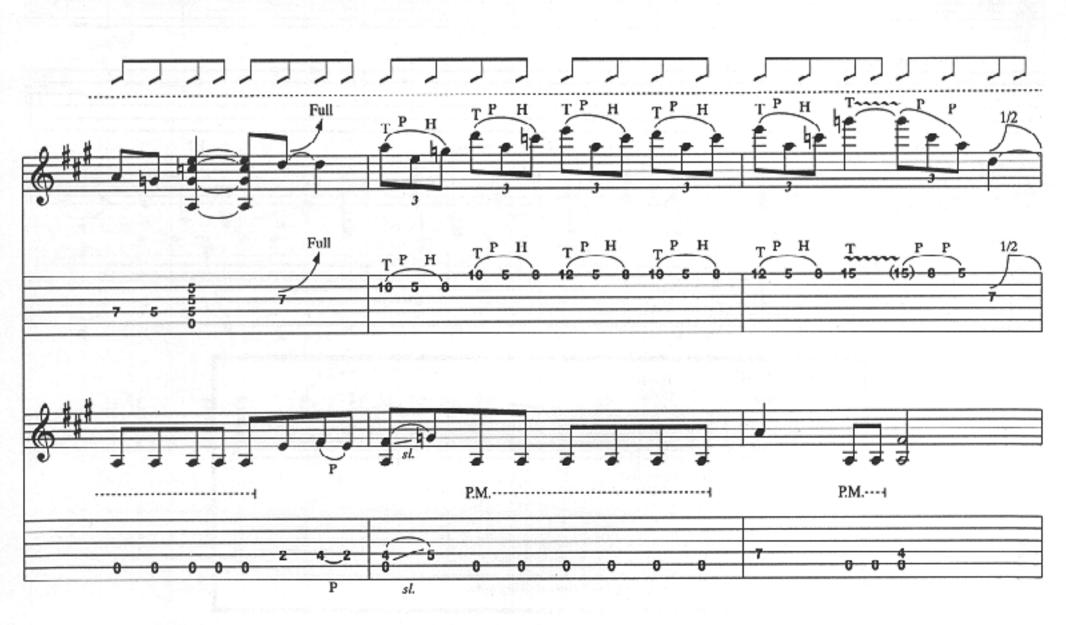
5

sl.

<sup>\*</sup>Depress bar before striking note.



















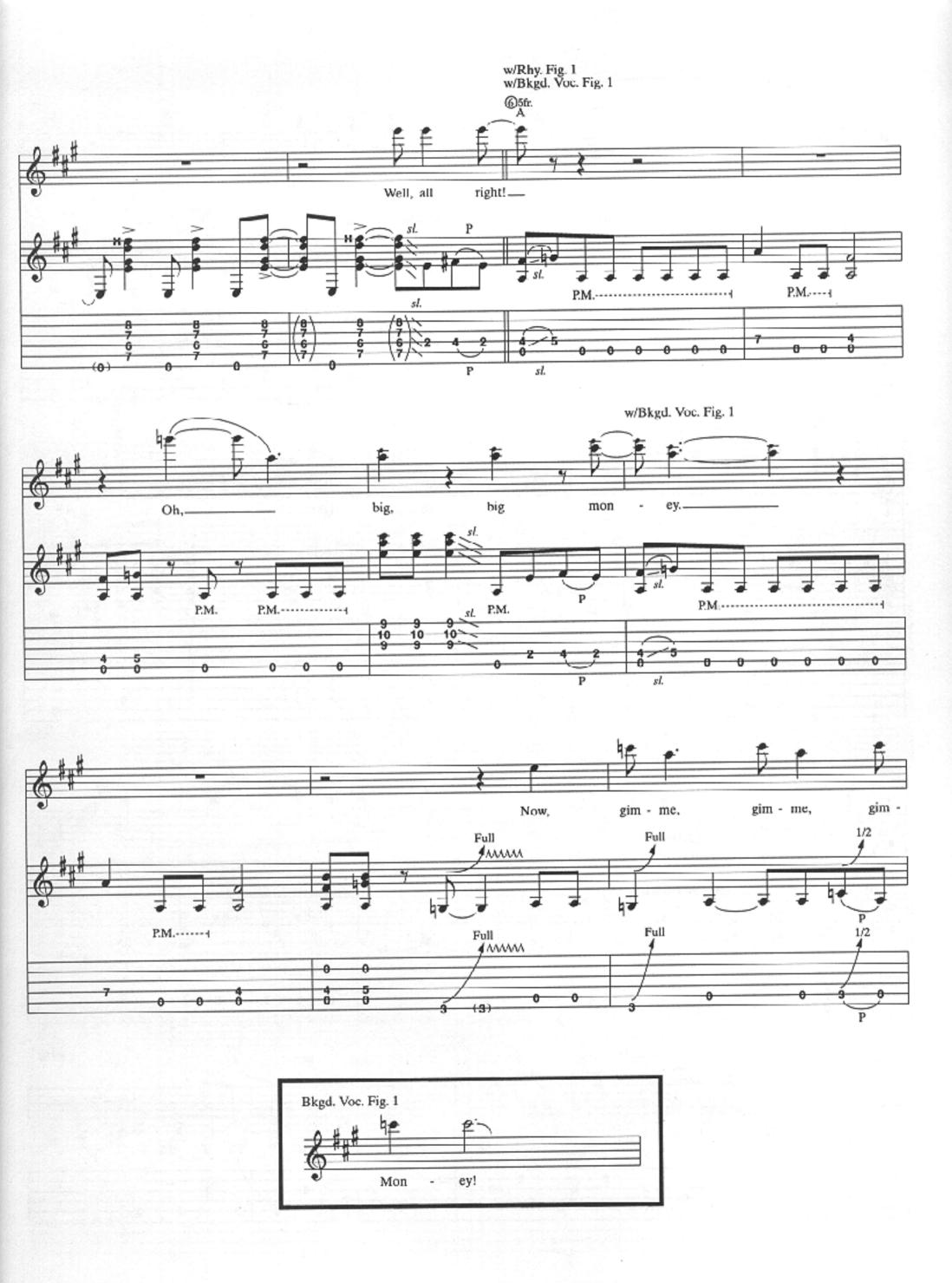


















## NOT ENOUGH

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen

















## **AFTERSHOCK**

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen











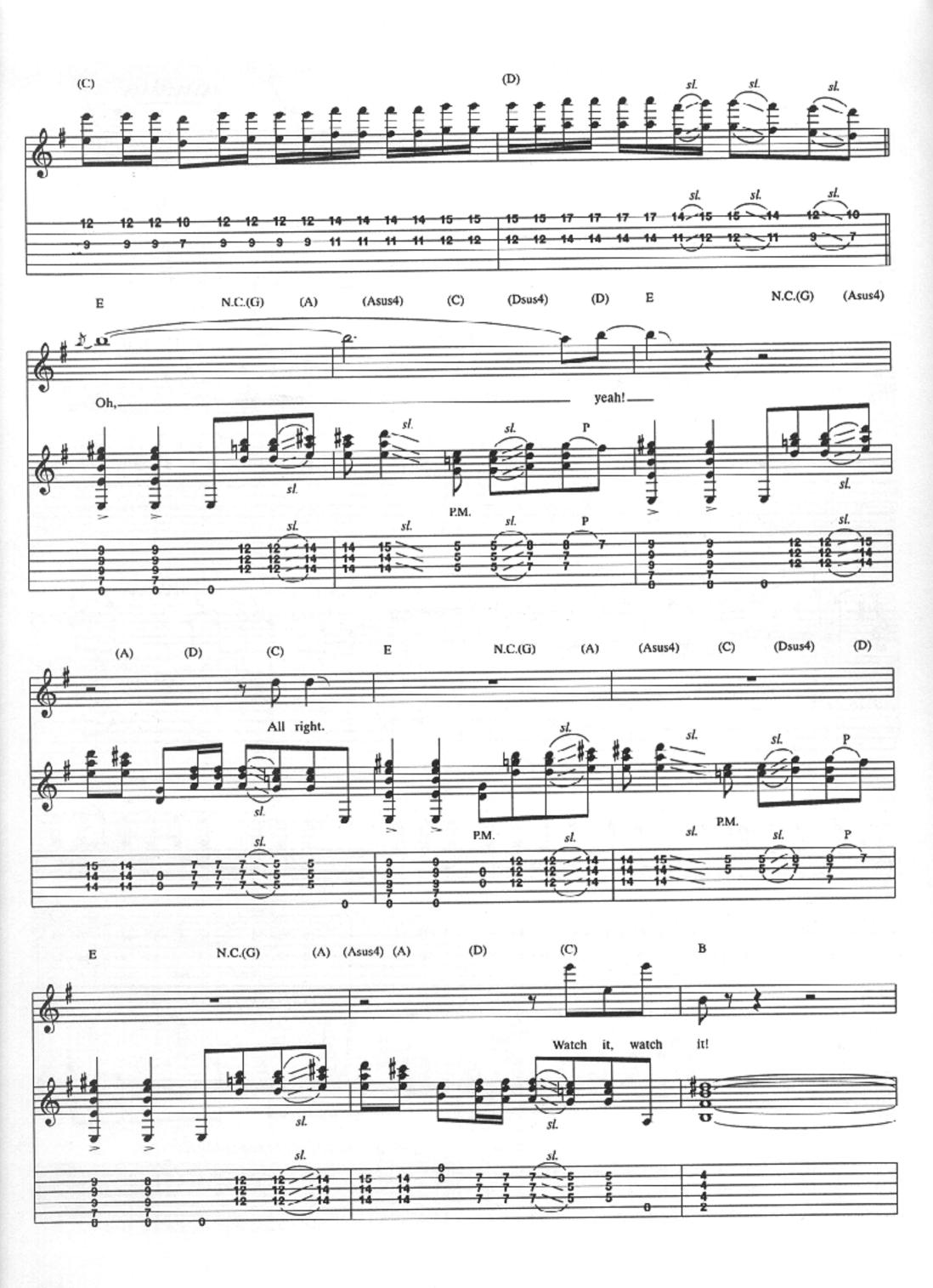














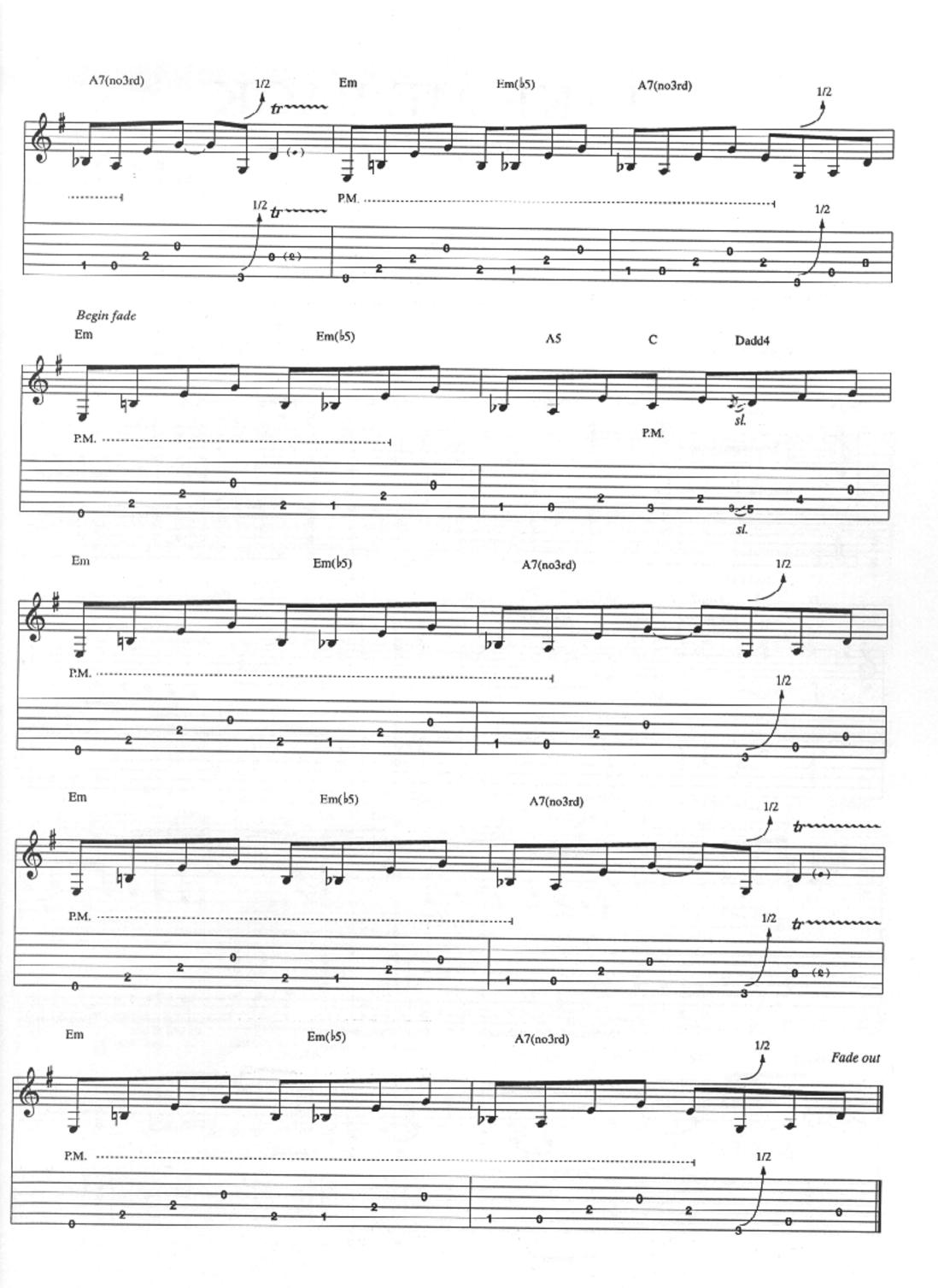












## TAKE ME BACK (DEJA VU)

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen



















## **FEELIN'**

Words and Music by Michael Anthony, Sammy Hagar, Alex Van Halen and Edward Van Halen





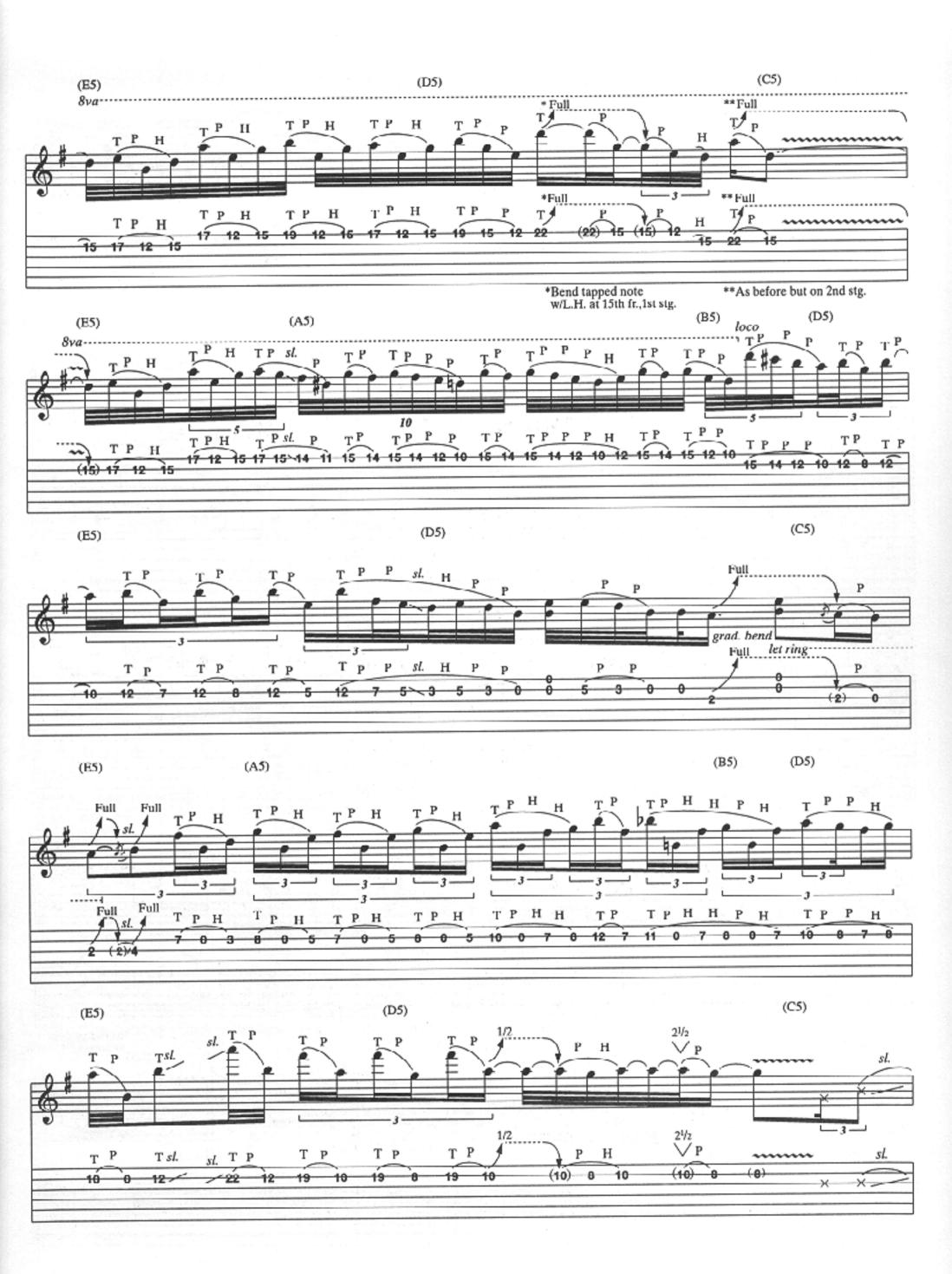
















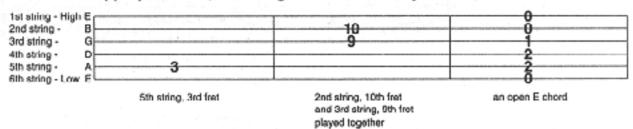






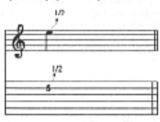
## • TABLATURE EXPLANATION/NOTATION LEGEND •

TABLATURE: A six-line staff that graphically represents the guitar fingerboard. By placing a number on the appropriate line, the string and the fret of any note can be indicated. For example:

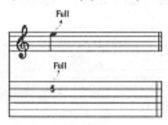


## **Definitions for Special Guitar Notations**

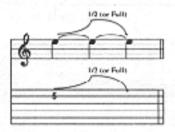
BEND: Strike the note and bend up % step (one fret).



BEND: Strike the note and bend up a whole step (two frets).



BEND AND RELEASE: Strike the note and bend up ½ (or whole) step, then release the bend back to the original note. All three notes are field only the first note is struck.



PRE-BEND: Bend the note up 1/2 (or whole) step, then strike it.



PRE-BEND AND RELEASE: Bend the note up ½ (or whole) step, strike it and release the bend back to the original note.



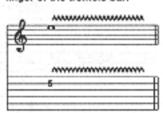
UNISON BEND: Strike the two notes simultaneously and bend the lower note to the pitch of the higher.



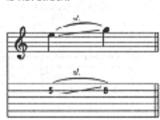
VIBRATO: Vibrate the note by rapidly bending and releasing the string with a left-hand finger.



WIDE OR EXAGGERATED VI-BRATO: Vibrate the pitch to a greater degree with a left-hand finger or the tremolo bar.



SLIDE: Strike the first note and then with the same left-hand finger move up the string to the second note. The second note is not struck.



SLIDE: Same as above, except



SLIDE: Slide up to the note indicated from a few frets below.



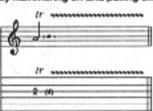
HAMMER-ON: Strike the first (lower) note, then sound the higher note with another finger by fretting it without picking.



PULL-OFF: Place both fingers on the notes to be sounded. Strike the first (higher) note, then sound the lower note by pulling the finger off the higher note while keeping the lower note fretted.



TRILL: Very rapidly alternate between the note indicated and the small note shown in parentheses by hammering on and pulling off.



TAPPING: Hammer ("tap") the fret indicated with the right-hand index or middle finger and pull off to the note fretted by the left hand.



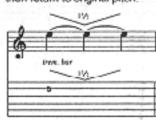
NATURAL HARMONIC: With a left-hand finger, lightly touch the string over the fret indicated, then strike it. A chime-like sound is produced.



ARTIFICIAL HARMONIC: Fret the note normally and sound the harmonic by adding the righthand thumb edge or index finger tip to the normal pick attack.



TREMOLO BAR: Drop the note by the number of steps indicated, then return to original pitch.



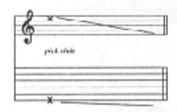
PALM MUTE: With the right hand, partially mute the note by lightly touching the string just before the bridge.



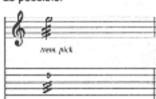
MUFFLED STRINGS: Lay the left hand across the strings without depressing them to the fret-board; strike the strings with the right hand, producing a percussive sound.



PICK SLIDE: Rub the pick edge down the length of the string to produce a scratchy sound.



TREMOLO PICKING: Pick the note as rapidly and continuously as possible.



RHYTHM SLASHES: Strum chords in rhythm indicated. Use chord voicings found in the fingering diagrams at the top of the first page of the transcription.



SINGLE-NOTE RHYTHM SLASHES: The circled number above the note name indicates which string to play. When successive notes are played on the same string, only the fret numbers are given.

